Model Sidewalk Regulations – Zoning & Subdivision

*Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission*

ZONING BYLAWS

# 1.0 – SIDEWALK REGULATIONS

## **1.1 – Purpose**

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The purpose of this bylaw is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the Town, and to ensure compliance with the following goals:

1. Promoting the safety of pedestrian access, movement, and protection for the physically able, physically challenged, children or seniors (or variously-abled) within the community;
2. Insuring that the ADA guidelines are met for all sidewalk or pathway installations, existing and proposed;
3. Promoting attractive and well-constructed sidewalks or pathways that correspond to the character, aesthetic qualities, natural, environmental, and historical features of developing or existing neighborhoods;
4. Connecting to existing and projected sidewalks or pathways whenever the opportunity arises to ensure an interconnected pedestrian system;
5. Ensuring that all development—including new construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation—provides adequate sidewalks.

## **1.2 – Definitions**

**Bi-walk:** A sidewalk or pathway designated shared use for bicycles, other non-motorized transportation, and pedestrians.

**Crosswalk:** Any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere that is distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing. If there is no marking, a sidewalk crossing is implied at each leg of every intersection by the extension of the lateral lines of the sidewalk on each side, or where the sidewalk would be if there is none.

**Driveway:** A private roadway providing access for vehicles to a parking space, garage, dwelling, or other structure.

**Infrastructure:**  Any public facility, system, or improvement including, without limitation, water and sewer mains and appurtenances, storm drains and structures, streets and sidewalks, trees and landscaping in public right-of-way, City/Town-owned and non-City/Town-owned utilities, and public safety equipment.

**Pedestrian Friendly:** The presence of facilities and design features that make an environment safe and attractive to pedestrians. These include: walkable distances between uses, (i.e. under ¼ mile); sidewalks, paths and walkways; continuous visual interest (i.e. uninterrupted line of buildings, attractive barrier in front of parking lots, murals on blank walls, infill development, pocket parks, etc.); consumer uses (i.e. restaurants, shops, cinemas, housing); trees for shade; awnings for shelter; buildings and landscaping elements sited to avoid wind tunnel effect, and to provide sheltered areas; visual texture in the streetscape (i.e. interesting storefronts, public art, plantings, pavement patterns, etc.); people presence (i.e. sidewalk cafes, street vendors, late business hours, residents using front porches and yards); good maintenance and inclusion of site amenities; buffers between cars and pedestrians (i.e. planted medians, on-street parking, grade separation); paths connecting adjacent uses; crosswalks and ramps; traffic calming devices; traffic lights; over- and underpasses.

**Sidewalk:** The area between the curb or edge of the street and the property line, whether or not it is improved. Sidewalks typically include three parts: the street transition zone (sometimes called the planter/furniture zone), the pedestrian clearway (called the sidewalk in common usage), and the building transition zone. The **street transition zone** lies between the curb and the pedestrian clearway. It provides buffering for pedestrians from the street and may include street trees, planted areas, benches, lighting, signs, public art, etc. The **pedestrian clearway** is typically paved. It is intended for pedestrian movement and should remain clear of obstacles. The **building transition zone** provides a transition from the pedestrian clearway to buildings. It provides space for planting, street furniture including café tables, art, door swings and movement in and out of buildings, etc. The term sidewalk may also include such parts of any streets or highway as shall be established or used and determined as foot-walks or sidewalks.

## **1.3 - REGULATIONS**

1.31 Sidewalks. Sidewalks shall be constructed in any area of the community where:

1. Sidewalks are necessary to provide adequate and safe routes for school children to and from their dwellings and to and from educational facilities;
2. Pedestrian traffic is not adequately accommodated by existing sidewalks;
3. No sidewalks are in existence;
4. There is an opportunity to make connections between existing or proposed sidewalks;
5. The health, welfare, and safety of the public require that adequate sidewalks be provided for the public convenience; and
6. All new development or redevelopment, construction or reconstruction.

1.32 Pedestrian Circulation Plan. The Planning Board requires inclusion of a pedestrian circulation plan and sidewalk profiles for all proposed subdivisions, site plan reviews and special permits. It shall include:

1. The location of streets and roads adjacent to the site and proposed roads within the site;
2. The location of existing walkways and paths on and off the site; the location of bus stops, parking lots, parking spaces, and driveways; the location of recreation facilities, religious structures, schools, industries, retail establishments, offices, and any other destination facilities; the location of residences; and any other structures or uses that may be requested by the Planning Board, DPW, Selectboard or other government body;
3. Links between sidewalks and pathways within the development, and to neighborhood destinations and existing or anticipated sidewalks or pathways in the surrounding area.
4. A description of estimated daily and peak-hour pedestrian trips to be generated by the site and flow patterns for pedestrians showing adequate access to and from the site and adequate circulation within the site; and
5. An interior traffic and pedestrian circulation plan designed to minimize conflicts and safety problems.

1.33 Standards for Pedestrian Clearways

1. Pedestrian clearways shall be at least 3 feet in width and shall meet the requirements set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Whenever possible, cross slope on pedestrian clearways shall not exceed 1:50
3. Changes in level up to 1/4 in (6 mm) may be vertical and without edge treatment. Changes in level between 1/4 in and 1/2 in (6 mm and 13 mm) shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1:2. Changes in level greater than 1/2 in (13 mm) shall be accomplished by means of a ramp that complies with these regulations.
4. Gratings. If gratings are located within the pedestrian clearway, then they shall have spaces no greater than 1/2 in (13 mm) wide in one direction. If gratings have elongated openings, then they shall be placed so that the long dimension is perpendicular to the dominant direction of travel.

1.34 Curb and Intersection Corner Ramps

1. Plans shall include, either within the corner or within the curb area immediately adjacent thereto, ramps allowing access to sidewalks and streets by variously-abled persons.
2. The ramps referred to in Subsection 1.34 (a) shall be designed and constructed in a good and substantial manner in accordance with plans and/or specifications provided in an appropriate professional design standards manual. The particular plan to be used at a given intersection corner shall be appropriate to the location as determined in a review by the City/Town Engineer.

1.35 Driveways. A driveway shall be considered part of the sidewalk:

1. After a driveway has been constructed, it shall be deemed a part of the sidewalk whether or not there is a sidewalk improvement extending along the balance of the frontage of the property, for all purposes of repair or reconstruction. Requirements relating to construction or reconstruction of a sidewalk as provided in this Chapter shall be applicable to reconstruction of a driveway which portion is in the sidewalk area of the right-of-way.
2. Wherever possible driveway aprons should not intrude into the pedestrian clearway. The pedestrian clearway shall maintain a cross slope of 1:50 across the entire driveway. The driveway apron should be located in the street transition zone between the pedestrian clearway and the roadway.
3. Where the street transition zone does not provide adequate space to transition from the grade of the pedestrian clearway to the grade of the roadway, a “dropped driveway” may be used. In a “dropped driveway,” the pedestrian clearway on either side of the driveway is sloped downward to the driveway which is at street grade. Whenever possible, the slope from the pedestrian clearway to the dropped driveway shall not exceed ADA guidelines.

1.36 Locations for Curb Extensions:

1. Curb extensions may be used at any corner location, or at any mid-block location where there is a marked crosswalk, provided there is a parking lane into which the curb may be extended. They may include transit stops.
2. Curb extensions are not generally used where there is no parking lane because of the potential hazard to bicycle travel.
3. Curbs may be extended into one or both streets at a corner. No obstructions or private use should occur in the curb extension.

1.37 Crosswalks

1. Crosswalks are a critical element of the pedestrian network to enable sidewalk transportation users to safely and conveniently cross intervening streets. Safe crosswalks support other transportation modes as well; transit riders, motorists, and bicyclists all may need to cross the street as pedestrians at some point in their trip.
2. Parking is prohibited within a crosswalk.
   1. Bi-walks
3. Sidewalks shall be constructed to form connections to and from public schools. These sidewalks or pathways shall be designated for bicycle and other non-motorized transportation use for students in all school grades.

1.39 Connectivity

1. When desirable for public convenience, a pedestrian or bicycle way may be required to connect to a cul-de-sac or to pass through an unusually long or oddly shaped block or otherwise provide appropriate circulation or continuity to a pedestrian or bicycle circulation system.

2.0 SUBDIVISION RULES AND REGULATIONS

(Under Rules and Regulations for Subdivision of Land, a paragraph inserted in the *Design Standards* section provides a direct way for the community to benefit.)

2.1 - SIDEWALKS

2.11 Sidewalk requirements:

1. Sidewalks shall be required on both sides of all new public streets.
2. Exceptions will be considered under the following conditions:
   * 1. Sidewalks shall be required on one side of the street if the right-of-way has severe topographic or natural resource constraints, or the street is a cul-de sac with four or fewer dwelling units.
     2. In such exceptions, the developer shall install an equal number of feet of sidewalk in another area of the community as deemed by the DPW Director, Municipal Engineer, and Planning Board. The developer may as an alternative devote that amount of work to the repair of sidewalk as deemed by the DPW Director, Municipal Engineer, and the Planning Board.
3. Sidewalks shall be required for all ANR lots that are part of a new subdivision.
4. Sidewalks shall be required for all new construction on ANR lots on all ways.
5. A buffer strip of four feet width between the pedestrian way and the road shall be required for all sidewalks to further provide a safe pedestrian environment. Shade trees shall be planted at thirty-foot intervals in a tree belt established in the buffer strip.
6. Pedestrian and bicycle ways: When desirable for public convenience, a pedestrian or bicycle way may be required to connect to a cul-de-sac or to pass through an unusually long or oddly shaped block or otherwise provide appropriate circulation or continuity to a pedestrian or bicycle circulation system.
7. Additional Right-of-Way Improvements: The Planning Board may require right-of-way improvements in excess of the right-of-way improvement requirements set forth in this section, if public right-of-way improvements that directly benefit and are necessary to serve the subject property or development require additional right-of-way improvements.